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## People Profile: Heather Wicht

Editor

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## Selecting and Acquiring eBooks: from page 26

loaded into **Collection Manager**. Libraries purchasing **EBL** titles in **Collection Manager** will have consolidated invoicing through **Blackwell's**. **Blackwell's** is also beginning to work directly with publishers to add their eBooks to **Collection Manager**.

In reality, eBooks are often released to eBook vendors after the print counterpart has been published, thus reducing the utility of these integration efforts. More publishers are beginning to publish eBooks and print books simultaneously, but they still may place an embargo period on eBooks sold through distributors, similar to the process of embargoing current issues of e-journals in aggregated databases. Both **Blackwell's** and **EBL** have been working collaboratively with publishers to find mutually beneficial arrangements that facilitate the early release of eBooks.

**netLibrary** has developed two of its own eBook ordering tools, **TitleSelect** and **TitleDirect**. **TitleSelect** is simply an online ordering interface for **netLibrary's** catalog of more than 70,000 eBooks, journal titles and other materials. Lists of titles can be shared among librarians before submitting an order. **TitleDirect** is a profiling tool that allows librarians to create eBook profiles based on subject areas, publishers and publication dates. Lists of new content matching the profile are emailed at desired intervals (every 30, 60 or 90 days). Although these tools aid librarians in navigating **netLibrary's** large collection, they require a separate process for eBook selection, which can be very time-consuming.

### Subscription-based eBook Purchases

eBook distributors such as **ebrary** and **Books 24x7** package eBooks in databases with annual subscriptions, creating a selection and acquisitions process very similar to that employed for aggregated e-journal databases (i.e., those provided by **EBSCOhost** and **Gale InfoTrac**). Many libraries purchase subscriptions to these eBook databases using serials funds and reevaluate the subscription each year. The utility and convenience of these eBook databases may outweigh the concern that eBook titles within the database are duplicates of titles in the library's print collection. Access to a collection of content that is constantly being refreshed may be the larger priority.

A growing trend among eBook vendors is to offer eBooks as part of mixed-format databases of e-content. Some vendors such as **Gale** and **Elsevier** are creating mixed-format databases that contain eBooks, e-journals, white papers and conference proceedings. **ebrary's Academic Complete** collection contains maps, sheet music, journals and reports, and **netLibrary** has subtly changed several occurrences of the word "eBook" to "eContent" on its search interface. As mentioned previously, **ebrary** will be making a major announcement in January 2005, about a new development that will enable libraries to create virtual library

## against the grain people profile

### Heather Wicht

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**BORN & LIVED:** Born & raised in Wisconsin, have lived in Colorado since 1998.

**EARLY LIFE:** Loved animals, school and being outside with friends; wanted to be a writer; gave all my books spine labels with paper & scotch tape.

**FAMILY:** Husband of 2 yrs and two yellow labs.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of music from **Northwestern University** in 1996, MLIS from **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** in 1998.

**FIRST JOB:** Babysitting...I probably babysat for 25 different families from the time I was 14 yrs. old all the way through grad school.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Study and teach Irish stepdancing, travel, read, knit, walk with the dogs and do yoga.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Shell Seekers*.

**PHILOSOPHY:** One day at a time; and The only way out is through.

**HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** Hopefully we will have implemented Shibboleth or a similar authentication method to move us beyond IP-authentication; electronic content will be aggregated and disaggregated in innovative ways to better serve users.



portals of e-content. The goal in amassing a focused pool of e-content with a common search interface is to create a tool that facilitates a more seamless research experience. It is clear that the eBook marketplace will continue to change and expand at a fast pace, offering libraries new purchase models that will further complicate selection and acquisition processes.

### The Cost of eBooks

Although eBook vendors are exploring new purchase models, eBooks can still deliver sticker shock. Is the cost justified by user needs and benefits such as full-text searching and anytime/anywhere access? eBooks purchased at the title level usually carry an annual access fee, and FTE-based subscriptions can be very expensive for medium to large libraries. On the other hand, eBooks can be easily and quickly made available to users, MARC records are often provided at no cost, and eBooks do not require shelf space.

Libraries have realized significant cost savings by participating in consortial eBook purchases. Consortial purchasing can work very well for subscription-based, bundled eBook packages. However, libraries participating in a shared collection built at the title level (such as **netLibrary**) may experience frustration at their reduced ability to tailor the collection to their own user community, and the process of building the collection can be a time-consuming effort.

### Considerations for eBook Selection

Fortunately, librarians are beginning to understand more about how patrons use eBooks. Usage statistics show that eBooks are being adopted at an increasing rate. As all types of readers encounter them in the online catalog and on the Internet, the demand has increased. Students appreciate the convenience of being able to access eBooks from their homes at all hours, while professors want the ability to include links to eBooks in course packs and use them in course reserves in the place of or in conjunction with a print copy.

Some important evaluation criteria should be considered in both title-by-title selection of eBooks and evaluation of bundled eBook packages:

- **User Expectations:** It is important to acquire eBook collection(s) that best serve your users' needs. Do you have a distance education program(s) to support? Does the faculty on your campus want to be able to use eBooks for reserves, link to them in course packs, or integrate them into Web instruction software such as **Blackboard** and **WebCT**? It is important to note that eBook vendors may limit or restrict these types of use.

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